

The Peerless Series
No. 47

MISSING LINES

A SKETCH

By C. Gordon Kurtz



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Norwich, N. Y.

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Stanton Amusement Co., Norwich, N. Y.

MISSING LINES

A Sketch

By C. Gordon Kurtz



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FRANK J. STANTON

Norwich, New York

MISSING LINES

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Betty Journeay, a girl who has "fought her way."

Pierre Wasmuth, a young author and her lover.

COSTUMES

For Betty: a very handsome evening gown.

For Pierre: a neat business suit.

PROPERTIES

Piano, sofa, parlor table and chairs, rugs, bric-a-brac, photographs, books, newspaper, palms, flowers, in fact anything for a handsomely furnished room.



TIME OF REPRESENTATION

25 to 30 minutes.

DEC -2 1921

PERMISSION

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Missing Lines

SCENE---A very handsomely furnished room; the sitting room of Betty Journeay's apartments. Piano R, sofa L, Table with chairs at sides C, books on table, photographs and bric-a-brac on piano, fur and other rugs laid, palms and flowers about stage. A parlor set with conservatory or balcony backing through Center Door, entrances Right and Left and Center. Betty is at piano playing some popular air as curtain rises.

PIERRE Enters L, with arms extended toward Betty, interrupting her playing. **Betty!**

BETTY turns on stool, stares at him **What! you here?**

P That's a nice way to greet a lover who has been away so long. advances toward her

B Go away, go away! I don't want to see you, you terrible ghost!

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P Ghost! what do you mean, ghost?

B Don't come near me, don't come near me! Why do you haunt me? What have I done to you?

P Betty, I don't understand you. Tell me-- advances

B rises Stop! if you come another step I shall ring for assistance.

P I call this a cool reception after my being away five years, and you of all others to greet me this way.

B B-b-but arn't you drowned?

P Me, drowned--do I look drowned?

B Are you sure you're alive and not haunting me?

P I'm as live as ever, and as to the drowning part, am the only one saved out of all that sailed on the ship, "Good Fortune."

B Then you didn't drown when the ship sank off the South Sea Islands?

P No, Betty. If you think I'm a spirit from the unknown, just come and punch me. I won't harm you.

B If you're sure you're not dead, I'll come and shake hands with you.

P I assure you I'm alive and kicking. dances See, I can make as much hoise as you can.

B Spirits can make noises too. They make blood-curdling noises.

P They make all their noise with chains. The only chain I have is a watch chain. shows watch chain Come and shake hands and I will tell you all.

B I guess I'll take a chance but I'm scared to death of spirits. advances slowly and greets him Why you are alive, arn't you? I thought you was dead five years ago.

P Where did you hear this--who told you? I'm anxious to have you tell me all about it.

B All right, let's sit on the sofa. they sit You know, Pierre, it seems great to see you again.

P You didn't show it when I first came in, did you?

B Well, to tell the truth, no; you know I thought you had left your grave to come back and torment me.

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P Even if I did you ought to be glad to see me.

B Oh, no; I'm terribly superstitious you know.

P Well, let's drop the ghost subject, I want to hear all about my supposed death.

B Well, after you sailed on the ship "Good Fortune," I knew it was a dangerous course you was taking. About six months after you sailed I received a letter from the company that owned the ship, stating that the "Good Fortune" was wrecked off the South Sea Islands and all on board had perished. When I saw you standing there you don't know what a queer sensation came over me, and I hardly knew what to do or say.

P I don't wonder that you was frightened. I'll never forget the glare in your eyes when you turned and saw me in front of you.

B When I think of it it gives me the shivers. Now I think it's your turn to clear up the mystery on your part.

P All right. It's as you've said, the "Good Fortune" was wrecked off the coast of the South Sea Islands. Fortunately I succeeded in getting a life preserver and I knew it was a case of everybody for himself. So I jumped into the sea with the life preserver around me. How I did it I do not know, but the next morning I found I had been washed upon the shore of one of the islands. There I was for five years, living on the fat of the land, and believe me it wasn't very fat, nor I didn't grow fat either. I just lived or I might better say I staid.

B How did you get away from the island? You didn't swim.

P No; it happened like this: While I was scouting about one day, looking for something to eat, I saw a ship approaching the island. I tried my best to attract attention and nervously waited to see if the ship had caught my signal. The few moments that passed seemed like years. It was a case of going back to civilization or staying in the wilds of no-man's-land. I anxiously watched to see what the ship would do. To my joy it came nearer and nearer and soon a boat was lowered and rowed to the island and --well, here I am.

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B How romantic and exciting!

P It was certainly exciting but far from romantic. I've something wonderful to tell you.

B What is it?

P I have been asked to write the story of my adventures on the island for one of the leading New York papers. Now isn't that fine?

B Wonderful. You must let me read it first. Will you?

P Yes, you shall have the first chance to censor it. looks around room I can't get over this swell apartment and all the fixings.

B Yes, it is quite a change.

P When I left, you and your mother and father were living in the old tenement on Chambers St.

B Yes.

P You were the little cashier in the restaurant on the corner, your mother taking in washings and your father a hod carrier. Now just look, here you are to-day.

B I'ts wonderful what changes take place in five years.

P Where's your dad, Betty, what's he doing now?

B Dad is dead. He died two years ago last winter.

P I'm sorry, Betty, I have recalled sad moments.

B You should know.

P And your mother, is she--

B Yes, mother is alive. She's at a party this evening. I didn't feel like going so staid home--to receive my ghostly guest.

P I can't see how you did it. You know what I mean--this place you're living in. Don't think I'm curious. It's none of my business, but you know it's a great change.

B Yes; it certainly is.

P We won't talk about it any more. What I want to know most of all is, after all these years that have passed, and you have never seen me nor I you, do you still love me?

B Yes, Pierre, but--

P You havn't shown it; you havn't even kissed me.

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B I couldn't do that. If I did, I wouldn't be true to my--

P Betty, is there another man who--

B Yes; I'm sorry to say it--but I am married.

P You! married? You're fooling me, aren't you?

B No; I'm telling you the truth.

P Who is he! Who is the man?

B Jack Craydon.

P Jack Craydon! rises You! marry Jack Craydon! The man who wronged me before I sailed. It was through him I was forced to sail on the ship "Good Fortune." So you married him?

B Yes, I married him. You see I had to.

P You had to?

B Yes, I had to.

P You don't mean---

B No, I had to marry him because it was my father's last wish and I promised him I would. So---I kept my promise.

P sits on sofa Are you happy with him?

B So far I have no complaint.

P But your promise to me, what of that?

B Don't make it any harder for me. You know I thought you was dead. What else could I do?

P I see now. You thought all hope lost. I wish you'd married any other man than Craydon. Every time I think of him, something rises in me that almost leads me to commit crime.

B seizes his arm You don't mean you could---kill him?

P Yes, I could almost kill him and feel innocent.

B But you won't, will you?

P For your sake, I will not. I hope I haven't been an intruder this evening.

B Oh no; I am glad that you called.

P Well, I think it's time that I leave. both rise, shake hands Betty, if we can't be the same old sweethearts, let's be the same old friends.

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B Yes, yes, we will always be friends. Now be sure and come and see me often, won't you?

P Not as often as I would like. We will still be the same old friends. starts to go L, turns By the way, Betty, I will want the play I gave you to keep for me before I sailed. You know the one I wrote, "Broken Chords," and left lines out all through it that I couldn't at the time fill in. I am going to try it again. Will you get it for me?

B I am sorry, but-- returns to sofa, sits.

P But what.

B I cannot give it to you.

P You can't give me my own play?

B I haven't it to give.

P You didn't destroy it, did you, after all the years it took me to write it. It was the hope of my future.

B No, I didn't destroy it, but I can't give it to you, that's all.

P Tell me why. I have a right to know. sits by her side

B I can't give it to you because I have sold it.

P You've sold it.

B Yes.

P I don't see how you could with all those missing lines in it.

B I sold it just the same. You know I thought you dead and so decided to sell it.

P So they took the play with missing lines. Whose name was it published in.

B Why mine.

P Published in your name. You did wrong. That was stealing.

B Stealing.

P Yes. The least you could have done would have been to have published it under the real author's name. So you published it in your own name.

B Yes, I thought you dead.

P That wouldn't make any difference.

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B I didn't think of that.

P It is the same as stealing. You published another's play under your name. You was willing to take all the honor and praise from the one who deserved it. That's the way of the world. One does the work and another gets the honors. To speak truthfully, I am ashamed of you. rises, walks up and down stage.

B Don't be too hard with me.

P Me, hard; I am doing my part to act like a gentleman.

B But you're angry.

P I have cause to be. A girl who would give up happiness for another man and steal her first lover's play, is enough to make any man angry.

B I didn't think you would take it to heart so.

P I want you to truthfully answer the question I am going to ask you. Did you get the money to furnish these apartments from the money you received from my play.

B Yes; that is why you see this change. It came by money received from your play.

P All I can say is that I am sorry I came here this evening. I wish I had really drowned when the ship was wrecked. I lived all those five years just for you, you alone and then--well to come here and find you the wife of the man I hate and that you have stolen my play.

B Please don't say I stole your play.

P What was it then, if not stealing.

B You don't understand. I thought you was dead.

P And I wish that I was, too, good and dead--dead as a door nail.

B I'm sorry; won't you forgive me?

P I can forgive you for taking my play but your marrying Jack Craydon I can never forgive.

B He is not half as bad as you think.

P I never saw him but what he was on some sinful errand that would lead to the ruination of another.

B I can't believe that, he has been so good to me.

P Well, he had better be.

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B I wish I could make you see as I do.

P I see it all, I must go and never return. But before I go, I want to bring back to your mind the poem I wrote in the play for you, **YOUR DREAMS AND MINE:**

You dreamed of the coziest of country bowers,
Secluded by trees and covered with flowers;
Where birds would sing their songs of love
And the skies be always blue above;
Where you hoped we always together would rest
In our little dream cot far out in the West.

2 You dreamed of another that would come to our nest;
I'd build him a cradle, where he could rest,
Among the boughs of the big green trees,
Where the cradle would rock to and fro in the breeze.
These were your dreams and I hoped in time,
They would surely and truly be mine.

It was for you Betty, just you alone. Good bye, Betty,
God bless and keep you and make you happy for my sake.

B rises as Pierre starts L Pierre! he stops and turns Will you do me one favor? I only want one.

P Yes, Betty; what is it?

B Come stand by me and let me play some of the old songs we used to sing together, will you.

P Yes.

B Thank you. she goes to piano, plays melody, he stands by her

P at finish Play more, Betty, it brings back happy days.

B Select something for me. Here are lots of them. she hands him music I'll play any that you like.

P he looks through the lot, stops at one, taking it out, hands others back to her Why, this is the name of the poem I just recited to you.

B Yes; open it and read the words.

P looks inside Betty, it's my poem and set to music!

B Yes; Look at the front cover. Who are the authors?

P looks, reads Lyric by Pierre Wasmuth, Music by Betty Journeyay. You don't mean to tell me that you--

B Yes, Pierre, I wrote the music and had it published.

P Betty, you're a wonder! I--

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B Come here, I want to show you something else. takes his hand, leads him to C D, pulls draperies aside, points Do you see that electric theatre sign? Read the announcement.

P reads "The Merrill Dramatic Co. presents Pierre Wasmuth's great drama 'Broken Chords.'" Betty, I don't understand. Will you explain? I have--

B I have still more to show you. leads him to table, picks up newspaper, points to article in same I want you to read that.

P takes paper, reads "To the public: Pierre Wasmuth's great drama, 'Broken Chords,' at the Criterion Theatre, commencing to-night. Don't miss this greatest masterpiece." turns I--I--thought you published the play under your name. Now I discover all in mine. Song, play, everything, in my honor. Why did you deceive me? How did you publish my play with the missing lines?

B I'll tell you all. But let us sit. they sit on sofa The first thing to tell you is that--I am not married.

P Not married! You told me--

B Yes, I know I did, but I am not married. I suppose you're terribly sorry, aren't you?

P Me--sorry? I should say not. I'm glad you're not married. I feel much better.

B I deceived you about my marriage and the play because I wanted to see if, after all these years, you still loved me. Pierre, you're true as gold. When I received the letter from the company you worked for, saying you was dead, there was something held me back from believing it. I kept nursing that thought until it became a firm belief. Then I thought of your play with the missing lines. I got it out, read and re-read, studied and studied it, until I filled in all the missing lines. After that I made an appointment with a producer and the play was accepted. It was a proud day for me, I can tell you.

P places arm around her You did all this for me. Betty, you are a wonderful girl.

B Don't praise me too much. You know I loved you.

P And the song--you composed the music.

B Yes; I loved the poem for it was meant for me. They

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will play the music at every performance of the play.

P Words cannot express the happiness you've brought me nor can I thank you enough for what you've done. How can I ever repay you, Betty?

B By being a good husband and staying home nights.

P With a wife like you how could I help it?

B You're praising me above my merit. I don't deserve it.

P You do and more. You slaved to gain me honor and fame. It was all your brains. When I think of it all it seems a dream. If it is, I hope I never wake up.

B Did I do right to sell the play for \$10,000 and a royalty of \$50 for every performance?

P You sold my play for all that money?

B Yes; I acted as your attorney. Did I do right?

P You did better than I ever could hope to have done.

B I'm glad you think so. You don't know how I have missed you all these years. Absence certainly makes the heart grow fonder. And now you're going to be mine.

P And you're going to be mine.

B I am the happiest girl in the world. Kiss me, Pierre.

P kisses her And I am the happiest man.

B One more favor. I have a box at the theatre. I want you to go with me and see "Broken Chords." I am sure the audience will want to see and hear from the author.

P I will go on one condition, Betty.

B And what is that?

P That you will appear with me.

B Anything that you wish.

P Come then, let's go. They rise, arms around each other they exit C D, with orchestra playing soft melody.

CURTAIN

25 cents each except as stated

28 Too Much of a Good Thing An interlude for 3 male characters, two blacks. Very laughable and funny. It will fit in nicely in any entertainment, minstrel or other. Will run about 15 minutes.

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38 The Doctor's Assistant. An extremely funny farce that runs 30 minutes. The fun occurs in the doctor's office and 4 males assist in making it, the doctor's "country" assistant furnishing about 90 per cent. Besides Reuben, in the cast are Dr. Killmore, a gentleman who is mistaken for a patient, and a policeman.

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